the draft of the National Civil Aviation Policy is presently under inter-ministerial consultation before being submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Sale of AI and IA's equity to staff

115. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to sell Air India and Indian Airlines equity to staff and small investors; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including the percentage of equity proposed to be sold to each category, the price thereof and by when the proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The proposals of Air India and Indian Airlines to go in for Initial Public Offering are under consideration of the Government.

Status of Pune Airport as an International Airport

†116. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to accord the status of international airport to Pune Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government are taking a decision to start air service between Pune and Sharjah keeping in view the large number of persons of the area employed in Gulf countries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) There is a proposal for declaring Pune Airport as an nternational Airport, for which inter-ministerial consultations have been started.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Airlines start air services to a foreign destination from international airports depending upon bilateral agreements, traffic requirements and commercial viability etc. At present, there is no such proposal under consideration.

(e) Does not arise.

Agreements under open sky policy

†117. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the new countries with which Government have entered into an agreement under open sky policy; and

(b) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The only Air Services Agreement signed by the Government which is based on 'Open Skies' principle is with USA. This agreement provides for unlimited access to the designated airlines without any restriction on points of call on reciprocal basis.

Permission for air ambulance service

†118. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accorded permission to a few hospitals to launch air ambulance service keeping in view their demand for providing quicker treatment; and

(b) if so, the names of such hospitals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No permission has been accorded specifically to launch air ambulance services. Aircraft can however, be chartered from non-scheduled operators for such services.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.